

# History by period

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Periodized human history is commonly divided into three main eras – Ancient, Post-classical, and Modern.

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## Ancient history (6,000 BCE – 650 CE)

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Ancient history refers to the time period since the introduction of writing systems c. 3000 BCE in the turn of prehistory to recorded history. It ends with the fall of several significant empires, such as the Western Roman Empire in the Mediterranean, the Han Dynasty in China, and the Gupta Empire in India, collectively around 650 CE.

The Bronze Age is the time period in which humans around the world began to use bronze as a major metal in tools. It is generally accepted as starting around 3600 BCE and ending with the advent of iron in 1000 BCE. The first writing systems were developed from their proto-writing counterparts in Mesopotamia c. 3,300 BCE, marking a shift from prehistory into ancient history around this time, although it varies from culture to culture.

The Iron Age is often called Antiquity or the Classical Era, but these periods more commonly refer to only one region. It begins around 1000 BCE with the widespread use of iron in tools. It is often accepted to end at approximately 650 CE, with the fall of the aforementioned major civilizations.

BC and BCE refer to the same time period. BCE is an abbreviation for Before Common Era, and BC for Before Christ. AD is Anno Domini, and CE is Common Era. This is done in order to standardize time periods across the world (ISO 8601).

- Stone Age Ended between 6000 and 2000 BCE (depending on the area; until 1600s European contact in Australia)
- History of Mesopotamia (6000 BCE – 1100 BCE)
- Indus Valley Civilization (3500 BCE – 1300 BCE)
- Old Kingdom (Egypt, 3000 BC)
- Middle Kingdom (Egypt, 2000 BCE – 1300 BCE)
- Vedic period India (1750 – 500 BCE)

- New Kingdom (Egypt, 1300 BCE – 700 BCE)
- Shang Dynasty (China 1800 BCE – 1200 BCE)
- Mediterranean Antiquity
- Zhou Dynasty (China, 1200 BCE – 500 BCE)
- Ancient Greece, (circa 1000 BCE – 146 BCE) (see Timeline of ancient Greece)
- Mahajanapadas (India 600 – 300 BCE)
- Ancient Rome (753 BCE – 476 CE)
- Keeladi Tamil Civilization (600 BCE)
- Classical India (230 BCE – 500 CE)
- Six Dynasties (China, 220 CE – 581 CE)
  - Three Kingdoms (China, 220–280)
- Late Antiquity (Europe, circa 300 CE – circa 476 CE)

## **Post-classical history (500 CE–1500 CE)**

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The Postclassical Era, also referred to as the Medieval period or, for Europe, the Middle Ages, begins around 500 CE after the fall of major civilizations, covering the advent of Islam. The period ends around 1450–1500, with events like the rise of moveable-type printing in Europe, the Mongol invasions and conquests across much of Eurasia, the voyages of Christopher Columbus, and the Ottoman Empire's conquest of Constantinople.

- Middle Ages (Europe, 5th century – 15th century) :
  - Early Middle Ages (Europe, 5th century – 11th century)
  - High Middle Ages (Europe, 11th century – 14th century)
  - Late Middle Ages (Europe, 14th century – 15th century)
- Byzantine Empire (Southeast Europe, 476–1453)
- Merovingian dynasty (France, 481–751)
- Middle kingdoms of India, (500–1206)
- Nara period (Japan, 709–795)
- Islamic Golden Age (Middle East, 750–1300)
- Carolingian dynasty (France, 751–987)
- Viking Age (Scandinavia, Europe, 793–1066)
- Period of Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms (China, 907–960)
- Capetian dynasty (France, 987–1792, 1814 and 1815–1848) :
  - Direct Capetians (France, 987–1328)
  - Direct Valois (France, 1328–1498)
- Crusades in the Holy Land (Mediterranean Sea, 1095–1291)
- Northern Crusades (Europe, 1147–1410)
- Mongol Empire (Eurasia, 1206–1368)
- Delhi Sultanate (India, 1206–1526)
- Sengoku period (Japan, 1478–1605)

## **Modern history (1500 CE–present)**

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The Modern Period covers human history from the creation of a more global network (i.e. the colonization of the Americas by Europeans) to the present day.

## Early Modern Period (1500–1750)

The Early Modern Period is the first third of the Modern Period and is often used with the parent categorization. It starts with the invention of the printing press, covering the voyage of Christopher Columbus in 1492 and, more generally, the establishment of a more global network. It ends in 1750 with the beginning of British industrialization.

- The Renaissance (Europe, 14th century – 17th century)
- Age of Discovery (or Exploration) (Europe, 15th century – 18th century)
- House of Valois-Orléans (France, 1498–1515) and Valois-Angoulême (France, 1515–1589)
- The Protestant Reformation (Europe, 16th century)
- Elizabethan period (England, 1558–1603)
- Age of Sail (referring to the commercial and military impact of sailing technology, usually dated as 1571–1862)
- House of Bourbon (France, 1589–1792)
- Qing dynasty (China, 1644–1912)
- The Age of Enlightenment (Europe, 18th century)

## Late Modern Period (1750–1945)

The Age of Revolution is a less commonly used period, but appropriately covers the time between the early modern and contemporary. It begins around 1750 with European industrialization and is marked by several political revolutions. It ends around 1945, with the relative advancement of industrialization in Europe, the United States, Japan, and Russia, and the end of World War II.

- Industrial Revolution (England, Great Britain, United Kingdom, Western Europe, elsewhere, 1760–1840<sup>[1]</sup>) and the Industrial Age (1760–late 20th century)
- Convict era (Australia, 1788–1868)
- French Revolution (France, Europe, 1789–1799) and Napoleonic Era (France, Europe, 1799–1814 and 1815)
- House of Bourbon and Bourbon Restoration (France, 1814 and 1815–1830)
- New Imperialism (Western Europe, 1815–1914)
- House of Orléans and July Monarchy (France, 1830–1848)
- Victorian era (the United Kingdom, 1837–1901)
- French Second Republic (France, 1848–1852)
- Second French Empire (France, 1852–1870)
- Meiji era (Japan, 1868–1912)
- Gilded Age (the United States, 1870–1900)
- French Third Republic (France, 1870–1940)
- Machine Age (Europe, United States, elsewhere, 1880–1945)
- Edwardian period (the United Kingdom, 1901–1910)
- World War I (Most of Europe, much of Earth, 1914–1918)
- Spanish flu (Most of Earth, February 1918 – April 1920)
- Interwar period (Earth, 1918–1939)

- The Roaring Twenties (United States, Earth, 1920–1929)
- The Great Depression (United States, Earth, 1929–1939)
- World War II (Most of Europe, Earth, 1939–1945)

## Contemporary Period (1945–present)

The Contemporary Period generally covers history still in living memory, approximately 100 years behind the current year. However, for all intents and purposes, the period will be used here as spanning from the second world war in 1945 to present day, as it is considered separate from the past eras and the newest stage of world history.

- Cold War (Soviet Union and United States, as well their allied states, 1945–1991)
- Space Age (after 1957)
- Information Age (1971–present)
- Post-communist period (Russia and other former Soviet states, after 1991) / Post-Cold War (Western world after 1991)
- War on Terror Era (after September 11, 2001)
- COVID-19 pandemic (Earth, 2019–present)

## See also

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- List of time periods – including paleoecological, paleogeological, archaeological, physical, and cosmological groupings.
- For histories of places see Category:History by region, Category:History by country, and Category:History by city.
- For histories of other topics, see Category:History by topic

## References

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1. "Industrial Revolution | Definition, History, Dates, Summary, & Facts | Britannica" (<https://www.britannica.com/event/Industrial-Revolution>).

## Works Cited

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